



FEMA

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TIPS ON CLEANING UP MOLD IN FLOODED HOMES

Removal of Mold Reduces Health Risks and Property Damage

ATLANTA – The flood waters in Tennessee are receding, but another problem may be rising. After natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes, excess moisture and standing water contribute to the growth of mold in homes and other buildings.

In just 24-48 hours of water exposure, surfaces and materials can become contaminated with mold. Saturated walls, soggy furniture and sopping carpet are the perfect environment for the development of mold and mildew, which can lead to health hazards.

Infants, the elderly or anyone with asthma, allergies and other breathing conditions may be more sensitive to mold. People with immune suppression are also susceptible to mold infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommend the following steps to get rid of mold in a flood-damaged home or building:

- Open windows and doors and use fans to dry out the building as quickly as possible. Use wet-vacs to remove water and run dehumidifiers in closed spaces.
- Wear protective eye-wear, latex or rubber gloves and a mask when working in an affected building.
- Remove baseboards and wet drywall a foot above the high water mark and throw it away. Drain walls by drilling holes or pulling paneling away from the studs. Check the interior of walls for mold.
- Discard anything that soaks up water that has been wet for more than 48 hours and cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried. This includes carpeting and carpet padding, upholstered furniture, drywall, floor and ceiling tiles, insulation, leather, wood, paper, clothing and food. If there is any doubt about whether the item has been affected by mold, toss it.
- Allow areas to dry for several days before replacing damaged materials.
- Wash hard surfaces such as metal, glass, solid wood, plastic and rough surfaces like concrete with non-ammonia detergent and hot water. After the mold is cleaned from the surface, disinfect it using a solution of one cup of bleach to one gallon of water; rinse after 10 minutes. Never mix bleach with ammonia.

(MORE)

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If the area to be cleaned exceeds 10 square feet, consult a professional contractor or the EPA guides *Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings* (available at www.epa.gov/mold/i-e-r.html).

For a brochure on mold prevention and cleanup, visit FEMA's recovery web pages at www.fema.gov/pdf/rebuild/recover/fema_mold_brochure_english.pdf.

For a Spanish version of this brochure, go to www.fema.gov/pdf/rebuild/recover/fema_mold_brochure_spanish.pdf.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585.

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